

SOCIAL ACTION

THE HOME IN TRANSITION
BY GRACE LOUCKS ELLIOTT

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INTRODUCTION

Change appears to be confusion when the onlooker has no understanding of the ends toward which the change is directed. If the onlooker is forced by events to become also a participator in the change which he does not understand, then his confusion is doubly confounded.

Many of us today are thus caught in the current confusions. The economic order, we are told, is shifting. The same changes which make newspaper headlines make immediate differences in our jobs, our budgets, our votes, our plans. We are part of the shift.

Likewise the social order changes. The trappings of yesterday—customs, manners, attitudes, ideas—seem awkward, even ridiculous, when hung upon today's streamlined silhouette. Education, recreation, religion—all are subject to this change.

The home has not escaped either the change or the confusion. Because some members of the family move in the larger world outside the household walls, there is continual in-flowing of new ideas. But the experience of the members of any household is not uniform. Mutual standards are subject to unequal tensions. For some, adaptation to new necessities is spontaneous; for others it is forced. For some the new ideas seem as inevitable as the blooming of a tree. For others, as artificial as paper flowers tied upon a stick. But for all of us it is easier to make adjustment if we can examine for ourselves and determine the real from the sham.

Because the home is the place of our rooting, changes which affect us there affect us most intimately, most surely.

It is important to understand them if we possibly can. To understand is to be no longer the creature of circumstance but at least in a measure the creator of circumstance. To see the inevitability of change is to open one's mind to the advisability of change. To accept change is to achieve a degree of serenity, and to begin to direct change is to have a hand in fashioning a fairer, juster world.

The present outreach of the home into industry is measured not only by the participation of its members in production but also by their power as consumers who may dictate the quality of goods they will buy and the conditions under which those goods are made. Hence, an understanding of the changing responsibilities of the home becomes an understanding of the larger context of economic and social change about us.

To promote such understanding this pamphlet is written.

THE EDITORS

The Home In Transition

• GRACE LOUCKS ELLIOTT

Importance of actually seeing and understanding the changes in family life and their causes; necessity of cooperative thought by youth and elders.

Everyone is being told that the home is breaking up and that the family itself is in jeopardy. If this be true, or in so far as it is true, there is occasion for alarm. But the fact of change does not necessarily establish the fear. That family life has changed seems unquestionably true; but that this change means the disintegration of the family does not necessarily follow. It is important to examine what is happening in order to determine what may be causes for satisfaction as well as causes for concern in the developments of which we are all a part.

In any transitional stage there can be few dogmatic answers. We are at present in a period in which the honesty and integrity of our search into the new forms and functions of the family can be of the greatest importance. If we are able to

create new ideals to meet a new day, then the new formulations can be made doors to deeper and richer experience. The experience of the elders cannot be adequate for youth; youth has as yet not enough experience to be adequate for itself, even though it is facing the future rather than the past. It is for this reason that one of the most important tasks before us is that *youth and*



"The experience of elders cannot be adequate; youth has as yet not enough experience—"

elders think seriously and cooperatively about the changes that must come to the life of the family and about the standards that can be used for judging the home of the future.

A Pioneer vs. a Modern Family

The absorption of the pioneer family in their economic functions; their economic, educational, religious self-sufficiency; steam power as a cause of change; movement toward the city; man's work shifting from the family context.

In the agricultural economy of our great-grandparents the life of both men and women was largely determined by their economic functions. A man was a farmer, husband and father, as his wife was the farmer's wife and the children's mother. There was little time or energy left after their necessary economic functions were performed for the development of either as differentiated individuals with other interests or activities. The functions of many industries were centered in the colonial family. All of the processes for providing clothing were carried on by the family—raising of the wool or flax, spinning, weaving, knitting, sewing, tailoring. All of the food except salt was provided by them—vegetables and fruit were grown, cooked, canned, dried and preserved. Animals were butchered and the meat cured; candles and soap were home-made; shoes and harness were made or at least repaired. Laundry, water supply, carpentry, sewage had to be handled at home.

In such a situation a man married not only a wife, but a business partner as well, and the children at a very early age contributed to the family income. The family was up at sunrise and went to bed early, but the long hours held varied work and were less monotonous than the shorter hours of modern factory work. The formal education of a few months at school was much less important than the basic skills learned by the boys and girls as they worked with their parents at a common enterprise. Manual training, physical education, domestic science were pro-

vided in shop and in kitchen. Religious education as well was carried on at home for the most part, around family altars and through a father's or mother's instructions.

This kind of home has already ceased to be. The introduction of steam power led to the development of life in the city more rapidly than in the country, and took people away from the pioneer home set-up. With the increasing concentration of people in towns and cities, small houses and multiple dwellings were built instead of large houses. Instead of being an independent productive unit, the family has become for the most part a dependent, non-productive one.

In this transition the work done by men was first taken out of the home. In a short period many individuals have become "landless, horseless, toolless, skilless"—simply cogs in the industrial production. Other individuals have gone into business or professional work; they leave home for the office and no longer have as fellow workers the members of their own households.

Women's Work Out of the Home

Influence of industrial development on women's work; number of women gainfully employed; their dual responsibility as wage-earner and home-maker; shift not of their own asking; women handicapped by lack of understanding and approval of their own place in the social process.

The same industrial development which took men's work out of the home has tended further to modify the family organiza-



"Manual training and domestic science were provided in shop and in kitchen—"

tion by taking women out of the home in increasing numbers. It is not safe longer to assume that the man's wage is a family wage. Often the wife's earnings must be added to those of the husband to make possible a healthful living standard. Where a bare minimum can be met by the man's wage, the woman's wage may be necessary if there are to be any cultural advantages or recreational activities within the family itself. According to the 1930 census, there were 10,762,116 women and girls above ten years of age gainfully employed. Of this number, 3,882,100 women had responsibility for the home-making for their families as well as a paid job. Almost a third of them—beside holding their jobs—were homemakers for families of two or more persons; 452,106 of them were the only wage earners in their families and for half of this number the family consisted of three or more persons.

This shifting of women from work in the home to work outside the home has not been the result of their conscious and deliberate revolt against prevailing social customs or attitudes. As was true for the men just a short time earlier, work outside the home has been forced upon them because of the changed conditions in the present order. Even before the depression, studies tended to show that as high as 90 per cent of women working were doing so because of necessity. The added precariousness that men face in both getting and holding a job since the depression makes it even more imperative for women to have a means of supplementing the man's wage if necessary. But many of these women workers—while participating in the new order—hold the older social attitudes and honestly feel that "woman's place is in the home" even when their work forces them out of the home. This feeling is often a handicap in the development of newer and sounder attitudes towards their new functions. Hence, women must often face the strain of the new adjustment without the re-inforcement that might come through an understanding of the social process of which they are inevitably a part.

The question, then, which we have to face is not whether married women ought to work. Woman's contribution to the economic support of the family is no new thing under the sun. We now need to question honestly under what conditions woman's work can be done in order to make for the greatest good for herself and for the family to whom she bears a woman's responsibility.

Women's Vocational Satisfaction in the Past

Personal distinction and social approval were formerly won through excellence in performance of household tasks many of which are now carried on outside the home.

The problem of woman's work outside the home is not solely an economic one. Moreover, the problem affects other women besides those whose husbands' wages can provide only the minimum essentials of life for the family. Even when women are not forced by the needs of the family to go outside the home to work, they have to face the loss of significant vocational responsibilities in the home. The kind of satisfaction which comes from vocational responsibility carried on with personal satisfaction and social recognition is necessary to women as well as to men. So long as the family's major needs for food and clothing, education and recreation, were provided within the home, woman's vocational expression was assured. When she provided for her larder, or made her children's clothes, she not only met economic needs but found creative expression for her personality and received society's recognition of her accomplishments. This was true for the work of maiden aunts as well as for that of their married sisters, for the constant child-bearing of the married called for the energies and skills of unmarried as a supplement in the household economy.

The degree to which economic, social and leisure time activities were coordinated into a social whole intimately connected with the daily process of living was the measure of the

emotional and intellectual satisfaction which woman's activity produced. In the modern home the woman is robbed of a major part of this vocational satisfaction by the development of labor saving devices and by the removal of so many functions from the home through service industries. Hornell Hart states that in 1930, one out of every five meals was eaten away from home, beside the simplification of additional meals whose food is prepared by the delicatessen and the factory. Two-thirds of the farm homes and 90 per cent of the city homes use baker's bread. Jams, jellies and preserves, which are at least close rivals to the best of the former home-made articles, are now available in stores almost as cheap as they can be put up at home. Such use of food materials gives little opportunity to develop or to show one's skill. Laundries now do the washing and ironing for great numbers of families, and even where laundry is done in the home, labor-saving devices have reduced the work involved. No longer does the beautiful ironing of ruffles, fluting, and accordion pleats proclaim a woman's skill. There is now small incentive for women to make their own or their children's clothes. Readymade clothes cost but little more, and it is difficult for most women to compete successfully in design and workmanship with the work of the factory.

Vocational Satisfaction for Women in the Present

Present need for vocational satisfaction; many homes make too little demand upon woman's energy and ability; inadequacy of most volunteer work; too much and too monotonous home cares; responsibility for education, for the franchise, for her own individuality.

For the first time in the history of the home we are faced with the necessity of ascertaining where the married woman is to secure that vocational satisfaction which once was automatically provided for her grandmother or for her mother. Even if there were no economic need for woman's working

outside the home, this is a problem which must be met. We cannot be blind to what the passing of the old system has already done to many women. If the vocational satisfactions necessary to sound personality development are denied women, there is likely to follow a parasitic, non-productive existence that society can ill afford to sponsor.

Any woman who lived in a ten-room house and had ten children had a full-time job, but at present few of the young people who are thinking of marriage will have either ten rooms or ten children. This is especially true for the young married woman who lives in an apartment or house whose size or equipment does not provide opportunity for enough activity to use up more than a fraction of the energy she may have at her command. To take care of a two- or three-room apartment and to cook for a husband who is at home for not more than two meals a day is hardly a job for a girl of average ability and strength. The college graduate who plays bridge and goes to movies to put in the time does not offer a happy picture from the angle of her own development, or from the angle of her relation with a husband who may have to work overtime to allow her the time she cannot use in creative or productive activity.

The common assumption is that there is volunteer work waiting for this kind of person; she can secure her vocational satisfaction in joining some worthy organization. But the nature of most of the volunteer work open to women without professional training is not of the kind to offer either personal or social satisfaction. Not yet have most volunteer jobs been analyzed with sufficient thought to give a real chance for creative expression to the



"The college graduate who plays bridge and goes to the movies to put in the time—"

individual undertaking them. Nor has the attitude of the volunteer towards her responsibility, if weather or her inclination are inclement, been developed to the point where she is likely to find real satisfaction in what she does.

At the other extreme from the woman who has not enough demanded of her, is the woman whose responsibilities are too heavy or too monotonous. Vocational satisfaction is impossible for the over-worked. When there are too many demands for the woman's strength, the life of the family must suffer because of her frayed nerves and lack of patience. So long as a man is away from that home at work he can avoid facing the strain of the unending hours of work which has made employment with regular hours seem a haven to many women. By and large, society has not adequately taken into account the strain and fatigue which come from living under the same roof with one's job, from being constantly on call, from the everlasting "picking-up" that is part of every household routine. When this routine is not relieved by time away from home, there is no chance for perspective or for that relaxation necessary for the happy life of the family or for sound achievement for the mother or her sound relationship with her children. The problem for many women is still how to secure enough relief from home responsibilities so that they have an opportunity to widen their interests and enrich their lives. Personal growth is an important component of vocational satisfaction.

Woman's vocational satisfaction is tied in with the fulfillment of still other responsibilities. In an amazingly short time society has granted her political and educational as well as economic status. More girls than boys are graduating from



"—from the everlasting 'picking-up' that is part of every household routine."

high school and going on to college and this education has widened women's fields of interests as it formerly widened the interests of men. Woman can now enter practically any vocation she chooses, subject as yet to discrimination in opportunity and equal pay. Woman now has begun to function, not only as wife, mother, housekeeper and economic partner, but as a person responsible to society for the expression of her own individuality. She is beginning to recognize that she will make less unsound demands upon the emotions and achievements of her loved ones as she finds within herself those things which in the past she asked others to provide for her. This new development cannot fail to make changes in the institution of the family. Women are not yet sure of this new responsibility. They may exaggerate it in adolescent fashion or be apologetic about it. They may refuse the new opportunities for development or exploit them. There will of necessity be complex questions to answer. But the very qualities of personality produced by the changes can become assets in solving the problems in such ways as to make for a richer life for the family.

Effects of Women's Work on Children

Change in family life when the father went outside the home to work; how much mothering can a child use to advantage; living on the child's level; delegating partial responsibility; delinquency; children educating one another; pride in mother's achievement.

One concern of all serious individuals is the effect upon children of a situation in which both men and women have vocational and other activities outside the home. Here, of course, is society's stake in the future. Here is our long-time measuring rod for adult vocational pursuits.

As men went out of the home to work, family life underwent a change of whose consequences we are only now beginning to be fully aware. The separation of men from the home

meant for many men a divorce from the responsibilities and satisfactions of their former share in family life. They became the individuals who "supported" the family by the pay envelope. They became to many children "the man who sleeps in the house." Even when the father came home before the children were asleep he was often so fatigued that mothers used every device to keep children from bothering him. Children thereby came to lose the relationship they had formerly had with their fathers.



"Even when father came home before the children were asleep he was often so fatigued that mother used every device to keep children from bothering him."

Will they also lose their former relationship to their mother? It is said that children need their mothers, hence, that a mother's activity outside the home when children are young is a necessary handicap to their development. In a sense women do bear a unique relation to children, inasmuch as neither biology nor human invention has as yet evolved a way by which men can bear the children. But after allowing for the period of child bearing, it is an open question as to how much of a given mother's time should be spent with her children. Where the major and sometimes the full responsibility for the children's development falls to women it is often a distinct liability because of the temperamental differences and likenesses between them and their children. Sometimes a child fails to achieve a satisfactory relationship with his mother because he is temperamentally so different from her that she cannot understand, appreciate or direct his reactions to the situations he must face. On the other hand, she may be so like him in her

own reactions to situations that she knows what he is going to do before he does it and so gives him no chance to be himself. She may be partial to the child most like her husband because she admires her husband's disposition in contrast with her own. Or, if she has had difficulty in making her adjustment to her husband's traits, a duplicate of him may receive all the emotional reactions produced by the two of them. It is for such reasons that most children need relationship with both father and mother. It is also for such reasons that women need other interests in addition to their children.

The creativity—the "success"—of the mother's relationship to her child may be determined by the number of hours she has to adjust to living on the child's level. Delight in a child's happy chatter may turn to irritation if one can hear nothing but the child's conversation. Provision for the mother's being away from little children for parts of a day may be as important for both mother and child as their being together.

Further, it must be admitted that not all mothers are equipped by temperament and skill to carry out adequately the routine of infant or child care. Nursery schools and kindergartens, which society will probably provide in increasing numbers, may offer as good or better care for children for parts of the day than they can secure from their own mothers. Factory production of clothing may insure for many children better fitting or more suitable clothing than would the work of the mother's needle, and at little, if any, added expense.

In other words, instead of suffering because of a mother's absence, many children would be better cared for if many of



"Nursery schools and kindergartens which society will probably provide in increasing numbers—"

the items of their physical care were the responsibility of others than their own mothers. This analysis does not excuse those mothers who take small responsibility for their children's care but irresponsibly delegate physical, intellectual and spiritual care to others. Such mothers are likely to cause difficulty for their children whether they are present or absent.

The fact that the mothers of many delinquent children have to be away from home for a major part of the day and so leave their children to the influences of the streets is often cited to substantiate the ill effects of a mother's having to work. But such a contention demands critical examination before it is accepted. In the same neighborhood, other children whose mothers are not employed are also delinquent. It is unsound therefore to cite the mother's absence as the chief contributing cause of delinquency.

Another consideration to be taken into account is the number of children who at present make up the average family. The development of birth control methods have made possible voluntary limitation of families. The economic limitations under which young people marry are making the average family of today two and a half children. The kind of education children received from one another in the former large family is no longer possible. For that reason, society is developing nursery schools in increasing numbers in order to give these children a chance to associate with there peers and to be relieved of the inevitable pressure of a world in which their associations are chiefly with adults. The school of today is taking more and more responsibility for the recreational and social development of children. In fact, the schedule of many children leaves little time when they would be at home without a mother's care even if she carried a full time job. There is also lack of space for urban children to play at home. There are fewer basements and attics where children can carry on interests of their own at home; there are fewer back yards where they may invite their friends. Society is attempting to meet

this situation by enlarging the responsibilities of the school and other agencies. But this development automatically modifies the function of the home.

Where children become a mother's major "job", they usually have to carry too heavy a responsibility for fulfilling her life as well as their own and so are hurt in the process. In the large families of former years, there was a certain amount of freedom afforded to children by their numbers and by the exacting responsibilities of the mother. There was, therefore, more chance for the children to develop their own lives in their own way.

Many mothers in the past have been troubled by children's lack of respect for or appreciation of their untiring service for them, and pride in the father's occupation, or achievement. This contrast has often caused resentment. On the other hand, children seem to show an equal pride in a mother's achievement. A mother's work is likely to cause the children embarrassment only if her husband or the community disapproves of what she does.



"In the large family there was a certain amount of freedom and privacy afforded to children by their numbers and by the exacting responsibilities of the mother."

Man's Attitude Towards Women's Work

A man's "self-respect" analyzed; woman's right to help decide her economic position.

A second question raised about a woman's working outside the home concerns the man's attitude towards her work. One often hears that "a man cannot keep his self-respect and allow his wife to work." This is true if, because she works, he takes no responsibility for the family support. But his attitude may indicate that he has not recognized that women have always contributed to the support of the family; he may be unwilling to admit that work away from home may not be so arduous or monotonous as is work within the home. Or it may only mean that he has not yet given thought to the new adjustments which must be made by his generation in contrast with the accepted role of his mother.

Again, it is sometimes held by men that a woman cannot respect a man who cannot support his family. But too often in the past the man's apparent magnanimity in insisting upon supporting his wife and family has been accompanied by subjection and domination. Many of the chivalrous clichés about women are sentimental coverings for lack of intellectual honesty and of emotional integrity. Woman's "priceless position" in a price society is not always an enviable situation. Likewise those things done for "love" have often become the basis of demands and exactions disastrous to the relationship between husband and wife. Often a boy makes the statement that he will not marry a girl until he can support her. This ought at least to be a mutual decision; for if he does not marry her, she may have to work anyway and should have some part in deciding whether she would rather work when married to him or as an unmarried woman.

Readjustments in the Work of the Home

Home responsibilities for both man and woman; heavy hand of custom; contribution of individual traits.

Certain readjustments in family life are necessary if the home under modern conditions is to be successful. If both husband and wife work outside the home, it would seem to follow that both would share in the work of the home. Too often in any arrangement where the wife worked out of the home it has been assumed that she carried in addition the work inside it. Many a woman has not been able to stand the physical and emotional demands of the two jobs. In any arrangement it will probably be necessary for her to carry a major part of the responsibility for the management of the home. But if she as well as her husband works outside the home, there should be a sharing of the work inside or else provision in the family budget to cover part of the home work.

This sharing of home responsibilities by husband and wife has been difficult to secure because of the extent to which the roles of men and women have been fixed as if there were an impassable gulf between them, and as if no man without loss of self-respect could do what has been designated as woman's work. But aptitude for most of the work of the home would seem to be rather a matter of individual than of sex difference. There is no real reason to assume that cooking is inherently woman's work when all of the highest paid chefs are men, or that sewing can be done only by women when the highest paid designers and tailors are men. Neither does there seem to be a valid reason for assuming that washing and ironing, scrub-



"If both husband and wife work outside the home it would seem to follow that both share in the work of the home."

ing and sweeping are better fitted to women's physical capacities than to men's. Boys in many progressive schools, where the old assumptions are not made, prefer to take cooking rather than "shop" while many of the girls choose the shop. Many a man might stay at home more willingly if he ate his own instead of his wife's cooking. Many a home would be more tastily furnished if the man had chosen the furniture and the color scheme for the decoration. Many children would be more becomingly dressed if their fathers chose their clothes. An eye for line and color is an individual rather than a sex difference. In the new partnership between men and women, there must be joint planning and joint responsibility for the things in the home that are the outward and visible signs of inner unity.

Economic Partnership in the Home

Readjustment of budget; mutual responsibility in earning and spending; other satisfactions than money in determining salary scales; children's relationship to making and spending the budget.

A second necessary readjustment concerns the family budget. Probably no one item of material arrangements in marriages of the past has been the source of more difficulty and strain than the wife's lack of economic independence. The failure of her husband to recognize that her services in the home were often worth in money value at least half of the man's income; her constant need to ask her husband for money and to have it given as a favor—these have resulted in many habits of dishonesty and of indirection on the wife's part, and sometimes in bitter resentment.

A real partnership in the economic arrangements of the home is more likely to happen where each is contributing money to the budget. But this partnership involves joint responsibility in administering the budget. Such an arrangement would do much to eliminate fear that if the wife's salary should be or become larger than that of her husband, there



"—her constant need to ask her husband for money and have it given as a favor—"

must inevitably be friction between them. Friction is more likely to occur when they fail to make a budget together which is based on their joint salaries and towards which each salary contributes. If the man's salary must pay the rent and the items lacking any glamor while hers supplies the extras, there is likely to be more difficulty than if an increase of salary for either means a better chance to have what both plan for.

Any mature consideration of the bases of money return for services must recognize that in some lines of work the returns are based on other satisfactions than those of money, and any two people who are mature enough to marry should be able to recognize that many factors other than personal ability go to determine salary scales.

If the family is to be a cooperating unit, economic partnership in the home must include the children as well as the father and mother. Children are now an economic burden for a much longer time and have almost lost the function they formerly had as contributing units of the pioneer family. Their economic dependence tends in many instances to become an emotional liability as well.

But children may be led to see how, in efficiently carrying out their responsibilities in home and school, they are potentially earning and so have a right to help plan a budget on a sharing basis. Wise training in the handling of money is one of the home's most important contributions to children and is very closely related to their growth in the management of them-

selves. After the children reach their teens, they should cooperate in setting up such items of the family expense as food, rent, tuition, insurance, medical care, contributions, and the like. This involves facing with their parents readjustments in the budget made necessary by decreases in income. It also involves planning for modifications in expenditures necessary for the purchase of an item of equipment, or in saving for a home.

Children need also to learn the value and use of money through shopping with their parents before they are given the entire responsibility of buying for themselves. They need to know when to buy and when to delay purchases; when to buy and when to save. They need to have experience in earning and in the use of an allowance. This kind of training helps the child to make the transition from economic dependence a gradual one and so enables children to assume adult family obligations with a kind of experience that will make for their own confidence and security.



"They need also to learn the value and use of money through shopping with their parents before they are given the entire responsibility of buying for themselves."

Status of Children in the Family

Despotism of a former day; anarchy in "emancipated" families; the child is a person; lack of comprehension between generations; mutual needs and services.

It is not alone in relation to budget and expenditures that the place of children in the home has to be reconsidered. No factor affecting family life has changed more than the status of children. In the past the father was the head of the house-

hold after the European patriarchal pattern. Children were supposed to be "seen and not heard". The constant repression of natural impulses in children was reinforced by religion. Such a system made for revolt and rebellion on the part of youth, but in so far as it was tempered by the genuine love of the parent for his child, it often developed sturdy character and the respect and gratitude of children.

Now, however, the picture is reversed. The children, and not the parents, tend to become the center of the home. They are encouraged to free expression of their desires, and discipline often tends to be frowned upon as bad taste. The result as seen in many so-called "emancipated families" has been anarchy as a substitute for despotism. Without external control children are left with no means of bringing their own conflicting impulses into any kind of integration. Lack of necessary consideration for the desires of others tends toward a conflict among family members which exhibits the worst aspects of individualism as a philosophy of life. Freedom is confused with license and self-indulgence, and children have been deprived of essential elements in their education for independence and maturity.

But to face the inadequacies of the uncritical espousal of freedom for children is not thereby to go back to the older control. It is rather to recognize that sound relationships between children and parents can be built only by the give and take between them characteristic of a true rather than a pseudo-democracy. *It is to hold fast to the truth that the child is a person, unique and self-determining, whose essential life dare not be determined or controlled by any external factor.* Such a relationship between parents and children involves time for being together and a technique for joint discussion of those things about which there is agreement or disagreement.

A comment by the authors of *Middletown* challenges us: "No two generations have faced each other across as wide a gap in their customary attitudes and behavior as have American

parents and children since the World War. And this disjunction has been increased by the depression. The cumulating rapidity of recent social change . . . is widening into something resembling a geometric ratio the gap between things that were 'right' yesterday and those that make sense to the new generation of today."

This break between parents and children is complicated by the decrease in the amount of time when parents and children are together. Schedules of different members of the family often prevent their being together at meal time. The radio for entertainment at meals is frequently a substitute for former table conversation. Even the use of language seems to have changed so that many a parent, who must perchance hear one end of a telephone conversation, feels he is listening to remarks in another tongue. Many a parent is shy or embarrassed before the seeming sex sophistication of his adolescent son or daughter. Hence discussion of action, or of values involved in the action, is likely to be carried on by the children with their fellows rather than with their parents. And so the gap between parents and children fails to be bridged.

The incontestable fact is that both groups need the interests and experience of the other. They might make a useful and even exciting contribution to one another could they learn the techniques of talking and thinking together, each with respect for the experience different from his own and for the integrity of the other who differs.



"The use of language seems to have changed to the place where many a parent who must perchance hear one end of a telephone conversation—"

Family Recreation

Formerly recreation centered in the home, the expense shared by boy and girl; now recreation largely outside home, expense too heavy on boy; increase in leisure time; new facilities for recreation.

One of the most obvious differences between the family of the past and of the present is the change in recreational activities. In the past, the home factored much more in the recreation of adolescents than has been true since the advent of the automobile. Under former conditions the expenses of a date were more likely to be shared by both boys and girls. Where the girl's cellar or refrigerator furnished the food for the party the boy took care of other expenses. Since refreshments are now secured at the soda fountain, or the restaurant, the boy has come to carry a disproportionate share if not the total cost. This often raises a serious problem which is not always faced by an honest sharing of expenses by the girl because the boy's self-respect does not allow it.

The long hours of work in the past left little time or energy for recreational interests for many people. Now, the same factors that have caused the economic insecurity have been making for shorter working hours. Men are finding time, for the first time since they went out of the home, to be with their families. The drudgery of the work of the home is being increasingly eliminated. However, one of the most serious problems in unemployment or in shorter hours of work is the lack of equipment of most people to use the time at their disposal constructively. For many the movie is the answer but this leaves much to be desired from the angle of family life. Few pictures are interesting to all of the family. The car ranks second as an answer to the problem of leisure. In *Middletown*, the Lynds found that the car was one of the family possessions most infrequently given up whatever the financial adjustments. But a car is often a source of severe family discord. Who shall use it? For what shall it be used? It does

owever, furnish a way for the family to go on recreational dventures together. Since the modern home is too limited in space and facilities to be the center of recreational activities, the family must find means of recreation together outside the home.

Personality Development in the Family

Changes within the home reflect changes in form and structure of society; affectual functions of the home; security and growth; freedom and discipline; external compulsions and self-control.

The vocational and institutional changes in the home are but a reflection of the changes which are taking place in the general form and structure of society. We need to examine the new situation to see what the assets and potential strengths of the home may be.

The affectual functions comprising the love relationship of husband and wife, and of parents and children are still left to the home; they have been taken over by no other agency or institution. Probably the most important single contribution still within the function of the home to perform is that of giving to its members experience in the security of belonging to one another and of being of value to one another. This contribution will never be a genuine one except as it is established and nurtured through the inevitable differences of interest and value, of opinion and conviction, which must be met in every normal family. Parents need to understand the essential integrity of life that seeks in varied ways to find its own expression. Many a child has been saved from otherwise disastrous consequences of some action by the assurance of his parents' belief in him, even though the parents might have to disapprove of the specific act.

The home is still undisputed as the place where children may best learn those things necessary for their development. It is the place where the basic learning in discipline should be ac-



"Parents need to understand the essential seriousness of youth which is often covered by masks of frivolity, revolt or sophistication."

for the child in that discipline without which no real freedom is possible. It is within the family that the child can come into an experience of "cooperative willing which implies the renunciation of arbitrariness on both sides" and can come to accept the necessary compulsions which are a part of the privileges of belonging in an organic relationship to other individuals. The home is the place where the external compulsions necessary to self-control can be provided because they are tempered with the love for whose sake renunciation of the individualistic impulses is made possible. In the home, there is opportunity for growth from irresponsible to responsible action, from impulsive to rational choice, from conformity to conviction.

Social Responsibility

Family relationship to society; women's relationship to collective bargaining and labor organizations; women as buyers; consumer responsibility.

This sense of responsible action cannot stop with the relationships within the family unit. The problems offered by the modern family are so largely social in their origin that any real

quired. Recognition of moral and social law in the achievement of personality means submission by all members of the family to law. It also means the transformation of such formulations of that law as may be outgrown. Parents need to understand the essential seriousness of youth which is often covered by marks of frivolity, revolt or sophistication.

The family still can offer the most effective training

solution of them is in large measure futile except as members of all families cooperatively attack the larger social issues. No family life can be sound where the family wage is below the minimum for physical needs, where men or women work for inadequate compensation or under conditions of constant fear and insecurity.

The objection most frequently raised at present to married women's working outside the home is that they should not have jobs while there are so many unemployed men and single women needing work. This objection could have validity only if the wage of the married men was adequate for the demands of their families. So long as it is not adequate in many cases society should not attempt to solve its larger employment problem by confusing it with a family problem.

Those who are interested in safeguarding the home as an institution cannot close their eyes to the larger economic issues which must be faced if the members of the family have any chance for vocational security.

No longer can individuals stand alone in a system in which collective bargaining is a necessary element. Whenever women at work undercut men's wages or refuse to accept their social responsibilities to their fellows in the vocational realm, they are showing signs of immaturity and of irresponsibility, dangerous for the family as well as for society. If women work, they must carry their full share of responsibility for others with whom they work, who are affected by the conditions under which they work. This means that women as well as men must face the questions of labor organization. In a society as potentially rich as is ours, we can and must learn to make use of the work of all workers, if life is to contribute to the welfare of all.

Family members must take responsibility also for their function as consumers as well as of workers. An individual's

standard of living depends not only on the number of dollars earned but also on the quantity and quality of the goods the dollars can buy. This consumer responsibility falls especially heavily on women since, according to marketing research experts, between 89 and 90 per cent of all spending is controlled by them. Women now buy rather than can their fruits and vegetables. But prices are small guide to quality; the same brand name may represent high quality in one part of the country and poor quality in another. Moreover, the choice of goods for which money is spent is influenced by advertising and advertising is frequently influenced by private profit rather than by interest in the social good, and so is often intentionally misleading or dishonest. Legal control of advertising cannot be provided rapidly and effectively enough to insure protection against worthless and dangerous products.

To learn, therefore, how and what to buy has become so complicated a process that a single individual is practically helpless. Hence the need to avail oneself of consumers advisory services, whose interest is to provide the technical guidance for consumers. Their ratings of products is made on the best judgments of technicians and consultants, with competence and freedom from commercial bias. This impartiality gives the consumer the chance to have his buying choices determined by technical tests rather than by the cleverness of an advertising copy-writer or the ingenuity of a manufacturer in making a shoddy product look like a good one.

It is also important for all consumers who take their social responsibility seriously to know what goods are made under fair labor conditions so that they can throw the weight of their purchasing power on the side of their social convictions. Thus



Woman as buyer

can consumers add their pressure to the fight for higher wages and for organization and collective bargaining. To wear a dress and use food prepared under conditions unsound to the worker is to share the guilt for the exploitation of human beings. Consumers cooperatives augment the buying power of a single family by gathering together whole communities of buyers who demand high quality goods at fair prices, with due consideration of conditions under which they are made.

Religion in the Family

Religious instruction no longer characteristic of the home; changing religious standards; lack of religious adjustment of parents; need for parent education in religion.

One of the most marked changes in the family is in the area of religion. The family altar and religious instruction are no longer characteristic of most families. Whatever instruction shall be given or whatever religious practices shall be carried on have been delegated to the church. Few parents attempt to talk about religion with their children—fewer succeed in having their children say prayers after six. One of the basic causes for this silence is that the changing intellectual life of the present has undermined for parents loyalty to moral and religious codes that were once unchallenged. In the area of moral and religious standards parents are the "lost generation." Their standards were formulated in a world which no longer exists; they have not yet lived long enough in the present one to have worked out for themselves the necessary modifications.

This lack of conviction on the part of adults about the values which make or break life is one of the most serious handicaps for the adolescents of today. To make choices one needs alternatives which may be weighed and chosen. To ask youth to think without material is in the intellectual realm to attempt to make bricks without straw. Present-day parents

need opportunity to make their own religious adjustments in order that they may be able to provide for the home a true religious atmosphere in terms of current conceptions and convictions. Responsibility for religion cannot be passed to the church, for without the cooperation of the home, the influence of the church is ineffective. Parent education in religion is one of the strategic opportunities and responsibilities of the church. The problem of religion in the modern home is unsolved; but until parents discover and meet their responsibilities in this area, the modern home will not have fulfilled its complete function.

The home of the type of our grandparents no longer exists but there need not be regret that the old structure has changed if thereby new and richer opportunities for the development of the lives of individuals result. Modern conditions have brought new problems but also new possibilities to home life. Husband and wife, parents and children, in the home of today may realize those possibilities, if their life together can be such as to make it easier for them to recognize their relationships with all of their fellows and with the totality of life in which and through which their individual lives come to have meaning and significance.



Grace Loucks Elliott

brings to this study a depth of experience in dealing with the problems of the modern home. She is consultant in this field for the national Young Women's Christian Association, also lecturer and author.

For groups which wish to use this pamphlet as the basis of a discussion group or study course, we recommend particularly Mrs. Elliott's books:

Understanding the Adolescent Girl, Holt, New York, \$1.25 (1930), 134 pages.

Women After Forty, (1936) Holt, New York, 213 pages, \$1.25.

Understanding Our Daughters, (a pamphlet, 1937). The Woman's Press, 600 Lexington Avenue, New York, 25c.

ADDITIONAL READING

Church Education for Family Life, by Blanche Carrier. Harpers, 1937, 250 pp., \$2.00.

State of the Family in the Modern World, by Arthur E. Holt, Willett, 1936, 202 pp., \$2.00.

Its purpose is to study the close relationship between religion, the family and society.

Modern Family and the Church, by Regina Clark Wieman. Harpers, 1937, 375 pp., \$3.00.

The Religious Book Club selection for October, 1937.

Problems of the Family, by W. Goodsell, Appleton-Century, 1937 (revised edition), 530 pp., \$3.50.

Special emphasis is placed upon present-day economic and social problems.

Test Your Knowledge on The Home in Social Action

1. Why do many husbands object to their wives working? Are their objections valid?
2. What is the actual contribution of the average home to the religious life of the children? Does the home of today contribute less than the home of a former generation? Why? What of the future?
3. How and when do children suffer through their mother's absence from home at work? How and when do they profit?
4. Is a woman more likely to use her time constructively for herself, her family, and society if she has a paid job, or if she gives her services free to some worthy organization?
5. Did you vote, or otherwise register your opinion, in favor of the child labor amendment? Do your buying-dollars add authority to your spoken opinion? Before you buy your family's clothes, do you find out conditions under which they are made? Your candle-wick spread? Your cotton goods? Your silks?
6. How many American women have full time paid jobs outside the home? What are the arguments in favor of women's participation in business, industry, the professions? Against such participation? What are the causes of their participation?
7. What is your food-budget for the year? How much can you gain in better standards by joining a cooperative?

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Each packet contains adequate resource materials, a study guide, a worship service. 25c. plus postage.